We claim:

--1. A method for managing a network, the network comprising:

partitioning the network into at least one subnet, the at least one subnet including a plurality of clients;

selecting one of the plurality of clients to be operable as a subnet controller; and

selecting another of the plurality of clients to be operable as a successor subnet controller,

the subnet controller and the successor subnet controller being operable for determining health of the plurality of clients within the at least one subnet.

--2. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein

selecting the one of the plurality of clients to be operable as the subnet controller includes

monitoring communications between each of the plurality of clients for determining whether one of the plurality of clients is operating as the subnet controller, and

performing a local election amongst the plurality of clients within the at least one subnet if it is determined that one of the plurality of clients is not operating as the subnet controller.

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--3. The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein monitoring communications includes

monitoring communications for a first predetermined period of time for determining whether one of the plurality of clients is operating as the subnet controller, and

repeating the monitoring after expiration of a second predetermined period of time.

--4. The method as set forth in claim 3, wherein monitoring communications for the first predetermined period of time includes

determining whether communication is originating from one of the plurality of clients indicative of the one of the plurality of clients operating as the subnet controller.

--5. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein determining whether communication is originating from the one of the plurality of clients includes

determining whether another of the plurality of clients receives a request for status from the one of the plurality of clients.

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--6. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the other of the plurality of clients is selected as the successor subnet controller when one of the subnet controller will be powered down, processor speed of the subnet controller has decreased below a predetermined threshold, memory capacity of the subnet controller has decreased below a predetermined capacity, the subnet controller is improperly operating and a user logs into the subnet controller.

--7. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein selecting another of the plurality of clients to be operable as the successor subnet controller includes

generating by the subnet controller a number,

transmitting by the subnet controller the number to each of the other plurality of clients,

generating by the each of the other plurality of clients a respective number,

comparing by the each of the other plurality of clients the respective number with the number associated with the subnet controller to determine if the respective number is greater than the number,

transmitting by at least one of the other plurality of clients its respective number to the other of the plurality

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of clients if it is determined that its respective number is greater than the number, and

repeating until one of the plurality of clients determines that its respective number is greater than the respective number of each of the other plurality of clients.

--8. The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein generating the number includes using a software application stored in a memory unit associated with the subnet controller to evaluate at least one of the following criteria associated with the subnet controller: processor speed, whether a user is logged into the subnet controller, a number of users connected to the subnet controller, a memory size, a network connection speed, central processing utilization and a number of processors.

--9. The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein generating the respective number for each of the other plurality of clients includes using a software application stored in a memory unit to evaluate at least one of the following criteria: processor speed, whether a user is logged in, a number of connected users, a memory size, a

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network connection speed, central processing utilization and a number of processors.

--10. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein selecting another of the plurality of clients to be operable as the successor subnet controller includes

the subnet controller maintaining a list of data identifying one or more of the plurality of clients having a number greater than a number associated with the subnet controller, each number being determined by evaluating at least one of the following criteria associated with the subnet controller and associated with the one or more of the plurality of clients: processor speed, whether a user is logged in, a number of connected users, a memory size, a network connection speed, central processing utilization and a number of processors,

determining the client identified in the list having the greatest number that is available for operating as the successor subnet controller, and

selecting the client to be operable as the successor subnet controller, if at least one client is available.

--11. The method as set forth in claim 10, wherein

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determining the client identified in the list having the greatest number that is available for operating as the successor subnet controller includes

determining whether the client identified in the list responded to data transmitted to the client from the subnet controller.

--12. The method as set forth in claim 10, further comprising:

performing a local election within the at least one subnet if at least one client in the list is not available for operating as the successor subnet controller to determine the successor subnet controller.

--13. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein determining the health of the plurality of clients includes

implementing at least one health rule by the subnet controller and the successor subnet controller, the at least one health rule being stored locally at the subnet controller and the successor subnet controller.

--14. The method as set forth in claim 13, wherein the at least one health rule includes at least one of

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determining whether a particular application is running on each of the plurality of clients,

determining a date of a particular virus definition file on each of the plurality of clients and whether the file is greater than a predetermined number of days,

determining whether each of the plurality of clients is running a particular server, and

determining whether a particular library is a particular version on each of the plurality of clients.

--15. A method for managing a subnet having a plurality of clients, the method comprising:

operating as a subnet controller, the subnet controller being one of the plurality of clients;

reporting to a global controller;

receiving data from the global controller;

transmitting data to the plurality of clients within the subnet;

receiving feedback data from at least one client of the plurality of clients;

evaluating the feedback data for determining health of the at least one client; and

reporting to the global controller data regarding the health of the at least one client.

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--16. The method as set forth in claim 15, further comprising:

determining a client of the plurality of clients to check the health of the clients within the subnet that did not provide the feedback data to the subnet controller; and

receiving data from the client regarding the health of the clients that did not provide the feedback data.

--17. The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein

the global controller is located outside the subnet and

reporting to the global controller includes

reporting to the global controller after expiration of a predetermined amount of time.

--18. The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein

receiving data from the global controller includes

receiving at least one health rule for the subnet controller to manage the subnet.

--19. The method as set forth in claim 18, wherein

the at least one health rule includes at least one of

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determining whether a particular application is running on each of the plurality of clients,

determining a date of a particular virus definition file on each of the plurality of clients and whether the file is greater than a predetermined number of days,

determining whether each of the plurality of clients is running a particular server, and

determining whether a particular library is a particular version on each of the plurality of clients.

--20. The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein the global controller dictates an interval of time during which the subnet controller checks the health of the plurality of clients, data indicating the interval of the time included within the data received from the global controller.

--21. The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein each of the plurality of clients has a rule parser, and

transmitting data to the plurality of clients within the subnet includes

transmitting at least one health rule for each of the plurality of clients to determine compliance with the at

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least one health rule using the respective rule parser, the at least one health rule being at least one question.

--22. The method as set forth in claim 21, wherein the subnet controller stores address data identifying each of the plurality of clients within the subnet for determining a quantity of and identity of clients that should respond to the at least one question.

--23. The method as set forth in claim 22, wherein receiving feedback data includes receiving at least one response to the at least one respective question.

--24. The method as set forth in claim 23, wherein the at least one response is one of true or false, yes or no, and pass or fail.

--25. The method as set forth in claim 23, wherein evaluating the feedback data for determining the health of the at least one client includes determining whether the at least one client is active in the subnet and whether the at least one response

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indicates compliance with the at least one corresponding health rule.

--26. The method as set forth in claim 25, wherein if the at least one client is determined to be active in the subnet and the at least one response indicates compliance with the at least one corresponding health rule, then a determination is made that the at least one client is healthy.

--27. The method as set forth in claim 25, wherein if the at least one client is determined to be active in the subnet and the at least one client did not transmit a response to the at least one question, then a determination is made that the at least one client is un-managed.

--28. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein determining the client of the plurality of clients to check the health of the clients within the subnet that did not provide the feedback data to the subnet controller includes

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transmitting at least one question to each of the clients of the plurality of clients that did provide the feedback data to the subnet controller,

determining which of the clients that did provide the feedback data to the subnet controller responds first to the at least one question, and

delegating a task of checking on the health of the clients within the subnet that did not provide the feedback data to the client that responds first, the task being to check on the health of the clients.

--29. The method as set forth in claim 28, wherein the client that responded first checks on the health of the clients within the subnet that did not provide the feedback data by pinging the clients that did not provide the feedback data and transmitting at least one question to at least one of the clients that respond to the pinging for determining the health of the at least one of the clients.

--30. The method as set forth in claim 15, further comprising:

determining a plurality of clients to check the health of the clients within the subnet that did not provide the feedback data to the subnet controller; and

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receiving data from the plurality of clients regarding the health of the clients that did not provide the feedback data.

--31. The method as set forth in claim 30, wherein

determining the plurality of clients to check the health of the clients within the subnet that did not provide the feedback data to the subnet controller includes

maintaining a queue of addresses of the clients within the subnet that did not provide the feedback data to the subnet controller,

transmitting a request to each of the clients that did provide the feedback data to check on the health of the clients within the subnet that did not provide the feedback data to the subnet controller, and

delegating tasks in batches to each of the plurality of clients in the order that each client responds to the request, each task being to check on the health of a client located at one of the addresses.

--32. The method as set forth in claim 31, wherein

the clients check on the health of the clients within the subnet that did not provide the feedback data by pinging the clients that did not provide the feedback data

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and transmitting at least one question to at least one of the clients that respond to the pinging for determining the health of the at least one of the clients.

--33. The method as set forth in claim 28, further comprising:

receiving data from the client that responded first indicating the health of the clients within the subnet that did not provide the feedback data.

--34. The method as set forth in claim 31, further comprising:

receiving data from the plurality of clients indicating the health of the clients within the subnet that did not provide the feedback data.

--35. A system for managing a network including at least one subnet, the system comprising:

a plurality of clients located within the at least one subnet, one client of the plurality of clients operable as a subnet controller for managing the at least one subnet, each of the plurality of clients having an election algorithm for selecting the one client within each of the plurality of subnets operable as the subnet controller; and

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a global controller coupled to the at least one subnet, the global controller transmitting at least one health rule to the one client within each of the plurality of subnets operable as the subnet controller, wherein the one client within the at least one subnet operable as the subnet controller delegates to at least one of the other clients within the at least one subnet monitoring of the plurality of clients within the at least one subnet according to the at least one health rule.

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